

ACCOUNT

OF

The Bartram Garden.

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SOLD AT THE FÊTE CHAMPÊTRE

Held at Bartram for the same Object,

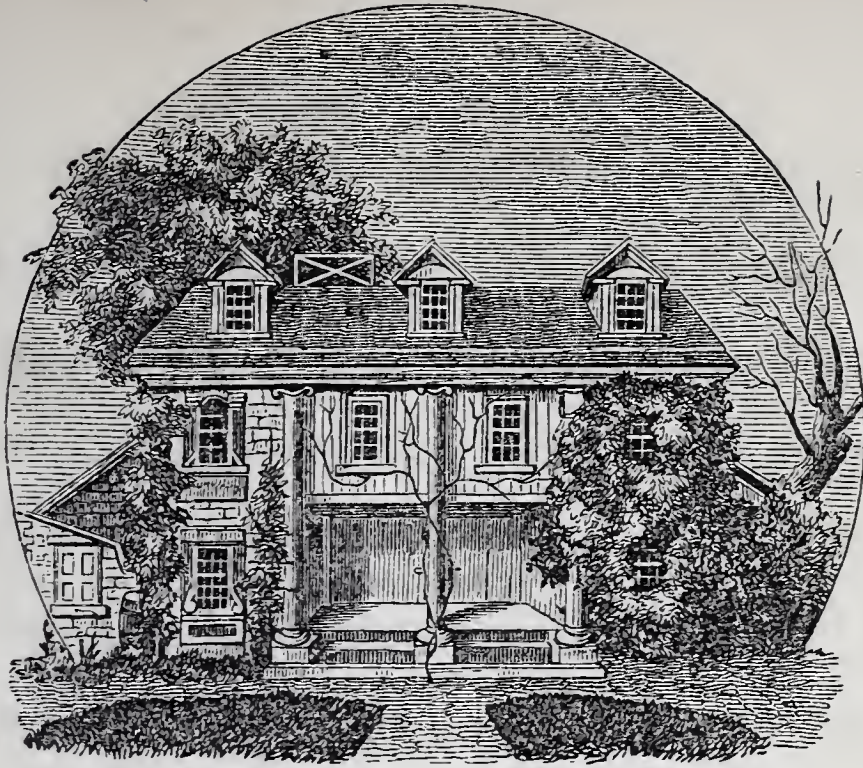
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## THE BARTRAM GARDEN.

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THIS garden was commenced in 1728, by John Bartram, one of the earliest American botanists.

Those who reverence antiquities feared that this spot, now historical from associations connected with its founder, would be desecrated by modern innovation, and made a convenient landing for coal and lumber. Such a use of it seemed probable when I visited the spot four years since, and I lingered under the fine cypress planted more than one hundred years ago, by Bartram's hand, measuring twenty feet in circumference, and reaching an altitude of one

hundred and twenty-five feet, and took, as I supposed, a last farewell of what so appropriately kept his memory green.

That such auguries were premature, I gladly acknowledged when I once more beheld this stately tree crowning with its magnificence the centre of the garden, and stood beneath its wide-spread branches, with one whose name is indissolubly connected with that of Bartram, and to whose zeal in gathering up the memorials of that worthy pioneer of American botany, must mainly be attributed the preservation of this interesting place.

For several years Bartram's descendants wished to dispose of it to some one capable of appreciating it, and have only recently succeeded in finding such a purchaser.

Andrew M. Eastwick, into whose hands it has fallen, is now putting it in order, and intends to preserve it a perennial monument of the taste and industry of our first native botanist.

Here flourish a greater variety of our indigenous trees, than can probably be found grouped together in any place of the same size; for John



Bartram travelled over nearly all of the United States then known, from Lake Ontario, in the north, to the source of the San Juan, in Florida. He explored rugged mountains and almost inaccessible swamps, and from every excursion brought home trees, plants, and seeds, to ornament his cherished garden.

One path, called "The Dark Walk," was planted during John Bartram's lifetime by his son, with different species of oak.

Here may be seen the finest variety of the king of trees in our country; among them are splendid specimens of the *Quercus macrocarpa*, *olivæformis*, *alba*, *rubra*, *heterophylla*, and *lyrata*. The *Q. macrocarpa* (overcup white oak) measures sixty-three feet in height, and six feet in circumference. The American white oak, eighty-five feet, and thirteen feet in circumference. The *Q. heterophylla*, marked by its lobed leaves, was named by Michaux "Bartram's Oak," as it was produced from an acorn of his planting. The original tree grew at a short distance from the garden, and was cut down many years ago by mistake; but two trees raised from its acorns are flourishing near the oak walk, which, though they

have lost the distinctive characteristics of the Bartram oak, still differ from *Q. phyllos*.

It has been supposed of late years that the Bartram oak is only a hybrid, not a distinct species, but trees with all Michaux's characteristics have been recently detected in Delaware.

Near the house still flourishes the Petré pear tree, planted nearly one hundred and thirty years ago, the seed having been sent from England by Lady Petré, as that of a fine butter pear. In one of Bartram's letters to Collinson, dated 1763, he says: "The pear raised from Lady Petré's seed, hath borne a number of the finest relished fruit. I think a better is not in the world."

To which the good old Quaker quaintly replies: "It has been thy patience to wait, but my pleasure to hear of the delicious pear, raised from Lady Petré's seed; but she, dear, good woman, has gone to rest." The tree still bears fruit of good size, and even in this age of fine pears, is esteemed an excellent autumn variety. Although so old, the tree is not large, for the *Pyrus* is of slow growth, and attains a greater age than any other fruit tree.



One planted by Governor Endicott (who was the second Puritan magistrate sent over to Salem in 1628) is still growing at Danvers, Mass., and produces a good crop of fruit annually. This must be as old, if not older, than the Stuyvesant pear tree in New York, for the renowned Peter exercised his gubernatorial functions full twenty years after the landing of Endicott at Salem.

There are four species of the *Magnolia* of our Southern States growing here, all of which are splendid specimens. The *M. auriculata* raises its gigantic head seventy feet high, and is five and a half feet in circumference. The *M. acuminata* (cucumber tree) is eighty feet high, and seven feet in circumference. The Franklin tree (*Gordonia pubescens*), with large white flowers like single camelias, flourishes here: this was discovered by William Bartram in Florida, and is the finest specimen of its kind in cultivation.

The beautiful native tree, *Virgilia lutea*, or Yellow-wood of the West, should be in its glory to-day, if the backward season has not delayed its graceful white flowers. The lovely form of this tree, together with its glossy foliage and drooping blossoms, renders

it an object of attraction, and the one in this garden, fifty feet high, with its cluster of stems four feet round, makes it a rare tree of beauty.

At the northeast angle of the house can be seen the *Paliurus australis*, or Christ's thorn, so called from the tradition which says the crown the mocking Jews placed upon our Saviour's head was formed of this plant; its horrid spines are only too suggestive of His bleeding brows. Rhododendrons, Kalmias, Halesias, and many other fine shrubs, have attained a good size.

At the foot of the garden is a curious antique stone cider-mill, hewn out of the living rock by the indefatigable botanist; it has long been disused, and lichens and mosses are now growing in the trough where the pomace was once ground. The press was erected on a flat stone near by, and the leverage attached to an old tree, now in decay. Bartram, with all his other avocations, had a fancy for working in stone, and in one of his letters he says, that he had built three houses with his own hands, blasting and hewing the rock himself. The garden-house, built in 1731, is a fine specimen of solid ma-



sonry, with even some attempt at ornament around the bases and capitals of the pillars and windows. In a conspicuous place in the wall are carved the following lines :

“ 'Tis God alone, Almighty Lord,

The Holy One by me adored.

JOHN BARTRAM, 1770 ;”

and, in another part of the exterior,

“ JOHN AND ANN BARTRAM, 1731.”

An old man told my informant that he had often seen Bartram at work on his house by moonlight after a day of toil.

John Bartram died a few days after the battle of Brandywine; and it was thought his life was shortened by the fears he entertained that the British troops, in their ferocity, might lay waste his darling garden, which he had cherished with so much care for more than half a century. His fears were happily not realized; for, while the British troops occu-

pied Philadelphia, the garden held a protection from Lord Howe, and was used as quarters for some officers of high rank, and was thus preserved uninjured, while many neighboring places were laid waste by the enemy.

There is an anecdote related by the descendants of the botanist that Washington, who was a frequent visitor at the garden, was one day with the French minister regaling himself with the delicious fruit of the Petré pear, while under the tree near them lay a cannon-ball, upon which the Frenchman placed his foot, asking the General, "What description of fruit is this?" to which Washington very promptly replied, "Ah, Count, that is a fruit hard of digestion."

Under an *Æsculus pavia* (Ohio Buckeye), around which once twined a luxuriant *Tecoma*, or trumpet creeper, whose lifeless trunk is still propped up, forming a sort of arbor, is the spot where the Father of his Country used often to sit. It was a favorite resort of Washington while he lived in Philadelphia. Retiring from public cares, he here held pleasant council with his friends, and they doubtless fought



their battles o'er again, and told how fields were lost and won, while around these veterans of the Revolution the scarlet trumpet-flower floated, recalling to the soldier's mind, even in this quiet retreat, the clang of battle and the wounds of many a hard-fought field.

Jefferson lived on the opposite side of the river, and often came over to discuss with Franklin and the prominent men of the day, the affairs of the Republic, then struggling into being.

— “O could thou speak,  
As in Dodona once thy kindred trees  
Oraclar, I would not curious ask  
The future, best unknown, but at thy mouth  
Inquisitive, the less ambiguous past!  
By thee I might correct, erroneous oft,  
The clock of history, facts and events  
Timing more punctual, unrecorded facts  
Recovering, and misstated setting right.”

Here lived and died John and William Bartram, both father and son. Of the former, Linnæus said, he was the greatest natural botanist of the age. Here,

too, Wilson, the ornithologist, resided for some time, and it was through William Bartram's encouragement and assistance that he was enabled to publish his work on American Birds. In it he often speaks of this garden, where the book was prepared.

The late lamented A. J. Downing added to the preceding articles, when published in "The Horticulturist," the following:

"Our fair correspondent must accept our thanks for her account of what we consider the most interesting garden in America, to every lover of trees.

"Many hours of profoundest admiration have we passed beneath its majestic shade, and we heartily rejoice to hear that this most venerable museum of trees has passed into the hands of a gentleman of taste, who can preserve, appreciate, and improve it. We have known intelligent foreigners to declare the sight of the magnificent specimens of Cypress, Magnolia, Oaks, and other American trees in this Bartram Garden, an ample reward for crossing the Atlantic."

The house, hallowed by the associations of a hun-



dred and thirty years, is now put in complete repair by its present owner, Mr. Eastwick, and will doubtless endure the storms of another century, beneath the sheltering vines and spreading trees planted by its celebrated founder.

